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for a series of years been in the habit of observation, must, let their charity be ever so comprehensive, bear testimony to a progressive neglect of periodical reverence in keeping inviolate the Sabbath of God, and improving, as they ought, the most inviting opportunities for celebrating His great and glorious Name. One, who is by a fullness of conviction compelled to deplore this alarming depravity, presumes to make the following effort, with a view to the common benefit of all who may be interested in such an attempt; of them especially, whose temporal enjoyment as well as everlasting welfare He has, through a course of years, been earnest to provide for and secure; by insisting upon the essential truths of Christianity, and endeavouring to enforce their obligation upon the conduct of

of his hearers. Effectual means, if any can be so, to attain the happiness of this life, as well as of that which is to come. At the present juncture, most distinguishedly marked by events, calculated to awaken the lethargic from that torpid indifference, which is not only inimical to their spiritual interest, but most obviously tends to the overthrow of their temporal blessings, the application of these hints cannot be unseasonable, nor, it is to be hoped, unprofitable. Conscious, however, of my own inability to gain attention, and being aware of prejudices, which, absurd as they are, possess and bias minds of a certain fastidious turn, I will not trust to mere sacerdotal counsel, with a view to any degree of success in circumstances so critical and commanding; but introduce a
 quotation .

quotation from the pen of a late excellent layman, who was the HONOUR OF HIS TIME.

“ The only sure method of engaging Omnipotence on our side, and obtaining the divine blessing upon the public counfels and affairs of the nation, is by studying to maintain the practice of all religious and moral duties; and in all things to please Him, who hath ten thousand ways, unknown to our limited understandings, of allaying heats and animosities, and of introducing into the hearts of His creatures that Spirit of concord, constancy, and courage, which, under Him, are the ornament and bulwark of the state.”

CHRISTIAN SABBATH, &c.

THE acknowledgement of a supreme Being, which is the voice of self conviction, originating in a persuasion of our own derived existence, and that of the numberless creatures which surround us, almost unavoidably suggests the thought of His inseparable claim to universal adoration. The more the mind of man hath employed itself, in the investigation of this visible world and its abounding objects, the more predominant was the assent, and the more clear and decided the inference resulting from it; insomuch, that doubt is unreasonable, and all hesitation seems to be repugnant to the light, which we have to guide us. If then the Fool, a character in that case decidedly fixed, should say, "there is no God," all debate with him about divine

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worship

worship is precluded. But, to acknowledge there is ONE, and to dispute that prerogative, which is essential to his existence, the title to a suitable homage from creatures capable of paying it, is such a contradiction, as cannot be reconciled to our rational discernment. Great, however, ~~as such an~~ absurdity must be, there is another not less obvious, and far more censurable; the allowing the justness and force of such an inference, the insisting upon such a peculiar prerogative, as immutably ascribeable to the maker and governor of the world, and yet neglecting to act up to such a persuasion by every becoming expression of humble and devout address to his throne. This most distinguishable tribute of dutiful regard, hath so pervaded mankind by an almost unbounded influence, that few have been strangers to it's application and effects. Superstition, it is too true, hath, from misconceiving the nature and attributes of the supreme object of our homage, sadly perverted this debt of gratitude, and opened a way for the introduction of idolatry. But, what does this infatuation tend to prove? certainly, that there is in the human mind an inherent;

inherent, shall we call it, or innate propensity to acknowledge our dependence, and to ascribe in consequence, to some over-ruling power suitable expressions of an obligation, thus originating, from a belief in an "UNKNOWN GOD." The persuasion, however perverted, or abused is, undoubtedly, right and good : and, had it been always well directed, as to it's object and end, would, far more than any other display of our faculties, have marked the dignity and realized the superiority of man. That it is not universally so, is owing to wilful degradation, and an obstinate departure from knowledge, and from rule. Neither superstition nor idolatry are genuine effects of the understanding, or the result of nature coming from the hand of it's divine, omnipotent, author. They are, at once, the offspring and the evidence of a fallen, corrupted, state, and demonstrate to what extravagances sin and wickedness, when they get the dominion over freedom of will, may lead their miserably deluded captives. Instruction, competent to the comfort, and well adapted to the guidance and practice of mankind, was, after the work of creation is

said to have ceased, communicated from the Almighty, which most probably contained, if we reason, by analogy, from God's other proceedings, rules for their conduct respecting both the nature of religious homage and the time of paying it. There is something, which leads to this conjecture, in what is reported of Cain and Abel; and though we cannot be certain what was prescribed or transacted in the antideluvian, or patriarchal, state; yet, it seems reasonable to suppose, that the injunction so solemnly enforced upon the Jews under the mosaic system, had been before given in the preceding ages of the world: perhaps, when creation was completed, and God expressed satisfaction in the perfect symmetry of His own work; when, as it is finely described in the book of Job, the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. However, tradition, the fallible guidance of which is too well known, cannot be relied upon in regard to such assurance; and therefore, not to presume beyond the clear warrant of authority, it will be best to look for the institution of a seventh day's Sabbath, as a time peculiarly marked for

for the payment of religious homage, under the superintendence of a Theocracy, incontrovertibly evidenced by its own signal and preternatural acts. In this dispensation, seemingly limited to a particular people, but universally extensive in its design and consequences, a most positive command is given for such observance, originating from the example of the Creator, and instituted with a view to the sacred celebration of His worship, as well as to the repose and comfort, not only of mankind, but of inferior creatures subject to their dominion. An example, thus awefully exhibited in the way of accommodation to the faculties and conceptions of the human mind, cannot, indeed, fail to excite a spirit of devotion, and to call forth such substantial acts of it, as most exactly correspond to the infinite Majesty of that all-glorious Being, who said, "let there be light, and there was light." The work of creation represented, as it is, in the mosaïc history, is such a stupendous display of infinite power, that it inspires, by an almost unavoidable impulse, conviction and rapture. And, whatever reasonings may follow upon it, they must be

from effect to cause, and can have, consistently, but one direction, which is, the tracing out by visible things their invisible Author; and, not only inferring, but arranging, His attributes in a symmetry of perfection, which, except by the light of revelation, we could only confusedly conjecture, but not, as we now may, clearly ascertain. The supreme "I AM," the self-existing JAH, in a manifestation of resplendent excellence, discovers Himself to his creatures by a claim to their self surrender and confidence, their adoration, service, and obedience, their supplications, thanks, and praises, which becomes indispensibly due, and can by no change of circumstances ever be cancelled or made void. It is equally inseparable from His controul and their dependence. Upon whatever particular ground therefore the Sabbath might be enjoined to that peculiar people, the Jews, in the first instance as a seventh day, or, however it was, afterwards reinforced under singular circumstances of trial and deliverance, as the great badge or sign of their connection with the divine Theocracy; it was, limited as it might be in a view merely ceremonial, in
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it's moral tendency and influence universally extensive and obligatory: for, if we believe that God is, it will be absurd and contradictory to withhold from Him such marks of homage and gratitude as He hath enabled us by the powers planted in our nature to express. If then we have our beings from Him, and live and move in Him, although we may not, as to the particular numerical day, or the rigour of it's ordinance, be under judaical restraint, yet, there is the same natural fitness, the same moral obligation, and the same unceasing motives, resulting from an unchangeable dependence, and multiplied blessings, to engage us to adopt a ritual suited to our circumstances, and not less honorable to that most adorable majesty whose we are, and whom we ought most actively and sincerely to venerate and obey.

HERE then we look to a change in our condition, which, though it does not cancel, but enhance, our duty, happily relieves us from the comparative severity of the old institution both as to the precise day and the burthen some peculiarities of it's observance.

Our Redemption by JESUS CHRIST, to whose cross the law of ordinances was nailed, and by which we are changed from a less glory to one triumphantly greater, fixes us in a new situation; and, though we reject the seventh day of the week as no longer binding in it's ceremonial exactness, yet we preserve it in a moral view, and by setting apart the first day as, in the fullest sense, holy to the Lord, being that day upon which our divine Saviour arose from the grave, we thus give weight to it's religious influence, whilst we comprehend the blessing of Redemption in addition to and in consummation of that of Creation. In doing which nothing, surely, is detracted from the honour of God, but we enhance, illustrate, and enforce our obligation to Omnipotence by a procedure so strikingly right in the eye of reason, and so sanctioned, as it seems to be, by the analogy and tenour of revelation. In respect to which, we have primitive practice, in uniform succession, for our encouragement and guidance.

The change was, manifestly, apostolic, and hath descended to our day as fixed at that æra, when such innovation, had it been criminal or culpable,

culpable, could not have remained in force, but would, we may justly presume, by a fullness of consent, have been exploded and suppressed. This sabbatical transfer of day did therefore take place in consequence of our Lord's glorious resurrection, when, by gaining a conquest over death, He led captivity captive, and gave a stroke to that Tyrant, which evinced that He was "God manifest in the flesh." Hence, by an appropriate distinction, strictly Christian, our **SABBATH** is emphatically called the **LORD'S DAY**. As such it has been received and acknowledged throughout the converted world almost without controversy; and in most parts of it observed with an exactness suitable to the purposes and ends of it's appointment. That solemn introduction to the fourth command, "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day," which is retained as a part of the Decalogue, and repeated at proper opportunities in our public service, is therefore both in a moral and a positive view, so far as it's restraining clauses affect our compliance, still to be regarded with a submissive reverence, however sacrifice may give way to mercy, or necessity may take place of form. Which distinction

distinction our divine Redeemer hath in a diversity of cases not only accurately pointed out, but affectingly sanctioned by his own most engaging example. Indeed, it is impossible for us to avoid discerning our obligation upon the strongest and most indispensable motives to keep holy our CHRISTIAN SABBATH; or distinguishing the just occasion, and proper extent, of our release, when allowable, from it's RITUAL SERVICE. So powerful are His allusions, and addressed with such a charming eloquence, to the understanding and to the heart, that it requires no time to explain the reasonableness of that preference, which He, speaking in this respect especially, as never man spake, recommends and enjoins.

What can be more illustrative of that duty, the duty of compassion to one another under our distresses, than the manner in which He puts these unanswerable questions in the case of the man with a withered hand, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil; to save life or to kill?" And again, in respect to His miraculous exertion for the relief and restoration of this afflicted patient;

"What

“ What man is there among you, who shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to DO WELL on the sabbath day.” Nor is this heavenly Lawgiver less clear and decisive when he has in view the calls of necessity and the cravings of nature; when He thus addresses Himself to the bigotted Pharisees who had accused his disciples of a breach of the law, because they plucked, and did eat the ears of corn, as an harmless expedient to satisfy their hunger, “ Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not

not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." Both these cases are strongly put, and precisely settled, so as to evince, beyond a doubt, that whatever particular restraints might for particular reasons, no longer binding, be connected with the Jewish sabbath, it is to be considered by us only in it's unchangeably moral obligation, in every act of it's exercise, with respect to our own personal necessities as well as the distresses of our fellow creatures. All which is fully implied in this sarcastical rebuke; " If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not," (that is) in preference to, " sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

But this is not the whole of that reasonable instruction which this divine Teacher then took occasion to give; for He not only speaks of " ONE," or of something, greater than the temple; but He claims a superiority of office described in terms before unknown, and strictly appropriate to Himself; " The sabbath was made for man; not man for the sabbath; wherefore the SON OF MAN is LORD also of the

the sabbath." In which words we may with great probability presume that He looks to a power of changing the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week, and it seems, without any strain put upon them, as if they were intended to convey a prophetic intimation of such a change, very consistently effected by Him, whose final declaration to his disciples was before He ascended, and upon which the commission was founded, "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." There is no peculiarity in this conjecture, as I find upon inquiry, that interpreters, whose names stand high as scripture Critics, lay much stress upon it. The pious women who had gratified their sorrowful sympathy by an attendance at the funeral of their Lord, observed, upon their return, the Jewish ritual, and kept the sabbath day according to the commandment. But afterwards, however the apostles might avail themselves of such opportunities in order by their teachings to convert those who heard them, no day is mentioned as the solemn season of their Christian assemblies but the first day of the week; when they are represented as performing different acts of religious

religious duty, and urging others to do so with
 an especial reference to the FIRST DAY OF
 THE WEEK, upon which day they assembled
 together, they broke bread, thus performing,
 in obedience to their dying Master's command,
 the solemn act of eucharistical obedience;
 they exercised compassion; they laid by
 in store, made a reserve, as God had pro-
 pered every man, for the necessity of the
 saints, for the emergencies of the destitute
 Christians, which was, in addition to acts of
 piety, and the acknowledgment of salvation by
 Jesus Christ, most suitably expressive of their
 gratitude to the divine mercy in their Redemp-
 tion, and the best proof of their "remember-
 ing to keep holy the sabbath day," thus un-
 alterably transferred, and decidedly fixed.
 Perhaps, this very distinguished, and singu-
 larly important *change*, might not be com-
 pletely effected, 'till some considerable length
 of time had elapsed: but most certain it is,
 that wherever Christianity took root, grew,
 and prevailed, there was an almost universal
 conviction of it's fitness and obligation, inso-
 much that the secular power, in the view both
 of duty and interest, came forward in it's
 countenance

countenance and support, by instituting and enforcing suitable regulations and laws in order to it's establishment and observance. In this island more particularly, such an interference very early and very laudably appeared, and, however defective or misapplied, in the dark days of Popery, it became after the Reformation, effulgent and powerful, and tended to produce, as it most evidently did produce, in point of religious seriousness, the very best effects.

Indeed, the necessity of a settled and regularly returning period for public worship, and private devotional retirement too, is in itself so striking, the proportion of time prescribed by divine authority so well adapted, and the appointment of the sabbath, on that day, as sanctioned under the Christian dispensation, so very desirable with a view to both the comfort of the body and the improvement of the soul, that approbation must, where the human intellect is not most unnaturally prejudiced, or corruptly biassed, attach itself strongly to an ordinance so peculiarly tending, by it's instrumentality, to provide for and secure our happiness both in
time

time and in eternity. An almost universal concurrence hath, therefore, in all quarters of the earth, where free access to the treasury of truth is encouraged, been steadily displayed in the acknowledgment and establishment of this sacred ordinance, and it's inviolable obligation upon rational Beings. Councils, and synods, and canons, regulations, and statutes, and laws, authority, civil as well as ecclesiastical, municipal, juridical, and regal, hath in all countries where Christianity is professed, whether under patriarchal, or papal, or protestant rule, been displayed and exerted with emulous animation on the side of this great Bulwark of Religion.

To go into a detail of historical deductions upon this point, would be encumbering the subject before us, by producing a multiplicity of witnesses, whose united suffrages arise from the clearest and fullest source of conviction, comprehending the most discerning, and wisest and best men. However then persons professing Christianity may have been divided in opinion respecting some other points, they have almost without exception agreed in this, and practically as well as avowedly stood unitedly forward

forward in it's support. That spirit of moderation and tolerating indulgence, which hath of late years pervaded our system of legislature, so far as they respect diversity of sentiment, and persuasion, hath indeed been productive of the happiest influence, whilst they, who were not compelled by harsh and arbitrary measures to come into a mode of worship, which they would not willingly adopt, have heartily combined by an exemplary attention to sanctify the Sabbath as appropriated to the LORD OF LIFE, and therefore, emphatically called HIS DAY. Now where the belief of a GOD prevails, and His glorious attributes present themselves in full lustre to our view ; where the dispensation of the Gospel breaks forth with it's superior splendour to captivate the soul, and redeeming love at once excites it's admiration and it's gratitude, nothing should seem to be better suited to it's own faculties, recollection, and prospects, than a certain portion of revolving time, in which our tribute of thanks and praise, and prayer, the proper incense of an exulting and triumphant heart, may ascend to the throne of our Maker, and

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Redeemer :

Redeemer: and acts of mercy may, however humble and imperfect, in imitation of divine excellence, attend our piety, sanctify our devotions, and give life to our obedience. Which is no longer fettered by the rigour of judaical injunction, but spiritualized and free, preparing itself for that eternal Sabbath which remaineth to the people of God. That blessed hope, to the accomplishment of which we look, under the influence of Gospel light and assurance, is thus by an habitual progress from one degree of elevation to another, enlivened and substantiated, and is induced to anticipate, by constant growth in grace, fulness of joy.

But it is not spiritual improvement alone and the refinement of moral life, for which the best provision is thus made by the institution of the Christian Sabbath, and it's solemn and regular observance. Our most valuable temporal interests are so intimately connected with it, and are so invariably involved in it's tendency and consequences, that we cannot wonder at the solicitude of Governors and Guardians of states and communities, for giving a fulness of aid in this way, by
such

such an exercise of authority, as may be profitably instrumental to the inforcement of the law of God. Which, however binding upon the judgment and the conscience of men, is, from some sad bias of depravity, too apt to be slighted and violated by many individuals, even them, whose example should, upon all accounts, be more brilliant and steady. Profligacy perhaps may start at such a provision, and very vainly pretend, and avail itself of such a pretence, that this is an invasion of natural liberty, and a rigorous treatment of them, who are born to think for themselves. But this is a mischievous, and often fatal delusion, and tends to the overthrow of social order, and comfort, and peace, and to the perdition of the unperfuadable, in respect to their own most valuable interests and blessings. With a view to avert which dreadful mischiefs, and to promote and secure all the ends and effects of God's positive command, endeared to us, as it is, by that mildness which surrounds it, human regulations have been devised and adopted, no where more worthy of applause, than in this country, where compulsion is

not exercised, nor any restraint attempted, except what is directly conducive to the advancement of the divine honour, and the security of the happiness of mankind. Look into our laws relative to the observance of the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath, from the time of the reformation, and you will find in respect to both these great points, such attention given, as does equal credit to the judgment and zeal of the advocates of Religion and it's inseparable interests, who thus endeavour, by means truly laudable, to establish the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Proofs of this sort are abundant, as they appear in our records, where they have been occasionally introduced for the prevention, or the correction, of neglects and offences disgraceful to the Christian Name, and repugnant to every right impression arising from a persuasion of God's existence and dominion. Here I would wish to particularize in some instances, and, having done so, to add such remarks, as the very important subject under consideration warrants.

A retrospective view in this way for more than two centuries past will fully satisfy us ;
and

and if we allow at the earliest part of the time so included for some peculiarities growing out of prejudices habitually rooted, we shall find, from the very dawn of the reformation, a succession of legal restraints relative to a serious and consistent observance of the LORD's Day; and enjoined with an earnestness, which gave to royal and subordinate authority, a weighty and sacred consequence*.

In that deplorable period of our history, when anarchy had erected it's banners upon the ruins of royalty, and religion had fallen into a distracted state, many of it's most solemn characteristics, and most venerable appendages, being sacrificed as victims to enthusiastic fury, still one point there was from which sacredness seemed to be inseparable, the observance of the LORD's day. An endeavour to secure sabbatical seriousness, and to keep that portion of time holy, marked the government, such as it then was, and dis-

* In King Henry the eighth's, Edward the sixth's, and Queen Elizabeth's reign downwards, this observation is fully verified, sanctioned in the present by ROYAL EXAMPLE.

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covered

covered some symptom of a zeal according to knowledge. Irregularity respecting the public worship of God, was discountenanced and prevented, and orders and injunctions were enforced by the authority of the state, for a grateful celebration of that day, upon which the LORD of Life rose triumphant from the bed of death. After the termination of which infatuated era, when the throne was again established upon its natural and legal foundation, more abundant care was applied to this great national concern; and the reformation duly honoured by providing in a religious view for the purity of its rites, and the preservation of decency and order in the observance of the Christian Sabbath; commemorative at once of those two most distinguished and stupendous blessings, which should never be long out of our minds, but then especially impressed upon them, CREATION AND REDEMPTION. Blessings, so connected with our personal and social enjoyment in this world, and so productive, in every view of consolation and happiness, in respect to a future, eternal, state, that no attachments to the duty required from us can
be

be too strong, nor any tender of prayer or praise be too fervent ; whilst our supplications, qualified by humility and faith, ascend to Heaven as incense, and our hearts, inspired by gratitude, abound in many thanksgivings to God. An exercise, from which no human being, one especially favoured with divine evangelical light, can surely ever wish to be restrained. If he could be thus unnatural, it is a self-denial of so severe a kind, that experience, and reason, properly so called, must declare against it ; and conscience, however deaf before to open rebuke, will secretly, and finally, condemn. Such has often been the death-bed lamentation of the dissolute offender *, and of the unhappy malefactor in approach to public execution. Under such circumstances there is no stifling the voice of nature, nor bidding defiance to the controul of that Almighty Regent, who will not fail eventually, in every proper season, to support

* The writer of these pages hath often had his sympathy excited by mourning with them who mourned ; and he is happy in recollecting, rejoicing with them, who, in the awful moment of dissolution, conscious of a compliance with the divine command, were enabled to rejoice.

His own authority. " Knowing therefore the terrour of the LORD we persuade men ;" and, when we can succeed in this good attempt, nothing is more certain than their happiness in result. Which obedience to the divine laws, will, in the order and course of things, always produce.

The want of such impresson, which so many motives conspire to make, is one fertile cause of lamentation in the present time, and sadly productive of a multiplicity of crimes amongst " high and low ;" whilst a contempt of divine no less than human authority induces irregularities subversive of social compact as well as personal comfort. It is painful to remark, but it is impossible to avoid it, that a gradually growing licentiousness, grounded in a disrespect to God and men, has for some years back been making bold advances towards an overthrow of modesty and propriety, of order and controul, of social regard and social subjection, and the several ties which are necessary to the preservation of civil life.

This is not empty talk, nor hasty prejudice, but observation founded upon glaring facts,

facts, upon appearances of evil, from which there seems to be in no station a solicitude to abstain. It is not indeed to be affirmed that every thing wrong in modern manners is resolvable into Sabbath-breaking, and a total neglect of divine worship, but the greatest and worst, and most fatal instances of immorality undoubtedly are. BLESSINGS are thus turned into CURSES, and judicial blindness precipitates it's captives into perdition. Such an assertion, it must be granted, is warranted by experience, which bids defiance to contradiction, and should rouse into exertion that well tempered power entrusted to magistracy, with a view to the correction of individuals, and the preservation of public welfare.

It should seem as if remissness had given encouragement to presumption, if we look to the gradual, but great, strides which this hath made in various ways of offence. Travelling for instance, no longer pleads necessity, but, in defiance of all rule and all authority, boldly tramples upon propriety and decorum, and utterly flights all attention to the Sabbath, and Sanctuary of God. In testimony of this far too much appears, periodically,

odically, in the crowded avenues of the metropolis; and a fullness of evidence is too striking upon all the public roads, and in our principal towns; as an occasional residence must painfully convince the serious observer. This is not the only grievance,* by which christianity is disgraced, and the cause of religion suffers. Tipling, even in time of divine service, gaming, and convivial meetings, and other lures, some of them under plausible pretences, but contradictory

* Hair-dressing, the circulation of news-papers, and the furnishing a supply to domestic calls, on the LORD'S Day, discover a licentiousness very inconsistent with sabbatical order and reverence to the law of GOD, and must be productive of many bad consequences both to individuals and the community. The same may be observed of certain periodical attendances, under whatever plausible pretext, where masters and mistresses of families are strolling from their settled places of worship, and instead of being examples of the believers where they should be, deprive their servants of spiritual comfort, and expose them to the allurements of vice.—That card playing in private houses, is upon the LORD'S Day frequently practised, is far from being a secret; and gambling, is too well known to prevail, in places of resort for that purpose, without any regard to divine, or human, prohibition.

to sabbatic order and it's just influence, defeat the appointment of the LORD's Day, and scandalize them who are consistent in it's stated observance. What can be said for these things? Is Laodicea transplanted, and is the character of Gallio become universal? Indifference and carelessness are ill omens of safety, whether personal, social, national, or religious. We know enough of this within a short space of time, beyond expectation and conjecture. GOD grant that our eyes may be opened to discern, and to provide for and esteem, the things which belong to our peace, before our feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and our candlestick is removed from it's place; before the vials of deserved wrath are poured forth, and infidelity, irreverence, and mockery end in the destruction of them, who know not GOD, and obey not His Gospel; who impiously shrink from the easy yoke, and disdainfully reject the light burthen of CHRIST.

The remarks I would add, are as follow:

1st, The great wisdom and goodness of the injunction in fixing by divine authority
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an allotment of time for the public solemnization of divine worship.

2dly, The obvious excellency of this provision, as to the particular portion thus selected and appointed.

3dly, The suitability of God's command in this respect to the Israelites under the theocratic dispensation by Moses, as there was in this a fullness of correspondence to their singular circumstances, and the ends to be accomplished by their being preserved a peculiar people.

4thly, The admirable consistency of a less rigid plan under the purely spiritual dispensation of the Gospel; and its beneficial influence, when duly applied, over the whole economy of intellectual and moral life.

5thly, The reasonableness of a compliance with such an institution, which is recommended by the best and most persuasive motives, and enforced by sanctions of the highest and most important kind.

Lastly, The certain danger of opposition, and the mischievous consequences resulting from it in every view, whether we look to individual comfort or social safety, the most substantial

substantial enjoyment of this earthly, or the glorious prospect of an heavenly state.

However universally disposed mankind might be, from innate principle, or from traditional instruction, to see the fitness of devoting to divine worship, corrupted as it might be by superstitious extravagance, some portion of that time, which they were allowed by God's appointment very variously to employ ; still, under the fullest impression in this way, they must have been doubtful how, with periodical exactness, to adjust this evidently interesting point. Which day and what proportional return of time to select and adopt, was not a determination obvious to human wisdom ; and therefore out of this inability, as we well know from heathen practices, the grossest errors arose*. To prevent and remove which, there was the loudest call for the interposition of a divine legislation, by expressly directing and commanding what, and in what measure, and

* If we look into the ridiculous invention of a late modern CALENDAR, we shall not find that new Heathenism has a right to boast of improvement by introducing *Decadi*.—What a JARGON! One day in ten, instead of one in seven, does not imply compassion for mankind.

what

what frequency of return, this appropriation of time should be ; thus relieving the human mind from distress, and compassionately enlightening that darkness, which overwhelmed it. Considered in this view, there is something most strikingly comfortable in such a display of divine goodness, whilst it inspires by such communication assurance and gladness, with a retrospect to God's own example in the work of Creation. Which communication is rendered still more illustrious by the exact portion of time allotted, from it's suitability to the circumstances of mankind, whether we recollect their toils or their pleasures, their doom to labour, or their pursuit of earthly delights, disposed and regulated by the creative and governing order of God. There is by the appointment of such a day, for such a purpose, opportunity afforded for the best exertions of our best faculties, and the dedicating to His honour that rest, which is with such an exquisite suitability adapted to our respective situations in life ; whilst after a six days employment, an indulgence of relaxation from this is granted on the SEVENTH, and no other restraint laid upon any occupation of life,

life, except that which must inspire us with the most penetrating feelings of gratitude and delight. Such ought to be the effect throughout all classes of men; and so far as it appears by a well regulated and united attendance upon the public service, *individually* improved by a sacred intercourse with the presence of the Almighty, certain it is, that no duty could be more mercifully enjoined. Nor could any portion of time, all circumstances considered in every view relative to the obedience of mankind, be better adapted than that which thus proclaims their dependence, and thus establishes the inviolable prerogative of God. This indeed hath been nicely consulted in His different dispensations, whether we look back to the severer law ordained for the Jews, or the lenient influence of that evangelical institution of the LORD'S Day, which Christians profess, and by the most solemn engagements are bound to observe. That peculiar people, to whom the divine oracles, under the Mosaic administration, were intrusted, required, on all sides, from their particularity of trial, and their propensity to be seduced into Gentile superstition and abominable idolatry,

latry, the strongest and most rigid guards upon their conduct ; more especially, in respect to a correct and exclusive belief in the existence and authority of **ONE SUPREME GOD**. The uniform operation, and full influence of which, must depend upon a just attention at duly returning seasons to public devotion, and the celebration of divine worship in spirit and in truth. To the Christian supplicant, whose heart cannot but be impressed with every most solid argument, as well as every most pleasing motive, resulting from a view of not only **CREATION**, but **REDEMPTION**, **THIS** is a first and fundamental act of duty, so very obvious and so very desirable, that it should seem hardly possible wilfully to neglect it. For if, in this respect, the ministration of condemnation had it's comparative excellence, in contradistinction to Gentile rituals, much more doth the ministration of righteousness, the evangelical provision for the stated worship of **GOD**, periodically commemorative of our **LORD**'s resurrection, exceed in glory. In this there are such powerful incentives to obedience, whether we look to the **HONOUR** of the Creator, or the comfort and

and enjoyment of the creature, that compliance seems to be almost irresistibly secured. What then can be said for that abounding perverseness, which so extravagantly pervades the manners of men? who in opposition to the fullest light, corresponding to all which can be called reason, counteract the most persuasive motives, the clearest arguments, and the most cogent sanctions, which can be proposed to the human mind. If there is such a thing as judgment without mercy, surely they deserve it, who shew no mercy to themselves, their fellow, or their inferior, creatures, whilst they refuse to walk, as He commands, humbly with their God. His injunction is founded in his own supremacy, perfectly accords with our nature and faculties, and is that which so long as the world shall subsist, must be binding; "Ye shall keep my Sabbath and reverence my sanctuary, I AM THE LORD." After an obligation, thus resulting from an authority, which can in no instance be disregarded with impunity, who acts most suitably to the circumstances of his being, and most consistently with his own substantial good, he,

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who is employed upon the LORD's Day in settling his worldly accounts, or sauntering or banquetting away his precious hours ; or, he who devoutly exercises his spiritual talents in sacred meditation, and gives life and lustre to that meditation, by joining at the proper seasons allotted for so delightful an attendance on the congregation of the faithful. The putting questions like these, may seem to imply a suspicion of the human intellect, or to suggest a severity of censure, which must be sadly disgraceful to moral agents. But, too certain it is, they are grounded. For, if we look around us, particularly in this vast metropolis and the vicinity ; examples without number will strike our observation, and shock the feelings of them, whose minds are under the influence of steady and well directed principles ; who, however they may be convinced that God, in a sabbatical view, prefers " mercy to sacrifice," where necessity fairly pleads for allowance from restraint, or charity expressly demands a deviation from rigid rule, must be abhorrent of all wilful dishonour studiously offered to God, in defiance of His own laws, and see with the
 extremest

extremest concern, them, who should be fellow candidates for immortality, despising the means of grace, and spurning at the hope of glory, flying from happiness, in different respects temporal no less than eternal, laying a sure foundation for ruin.

This is a painful reflection, but it is warranted by an alarming depravity of conduct, glaringly visible in different ranks and orders of mankind, high and low, rich and poor, descending with a deadly insinuation, so as to effect not only individual and social mischief, but to threaten by the enlargement and rapidity of it's progress, NATIONAL OVERTHROW.

The neglect of a due attention to this most essential instrument of public peace and prosperity, as well as of our own dearest personal happiness, is, we cannot but know, so alarmingly great, that it leads abandoned men to triumph, and good men almost to despair. To correct so enormous and pestilential an evil, and bring us back to that sense of duty and degree of order, which have in past time distinguished this Christian Country, some zealous friends to the cause of religion, and

the circulation of its most desirable influence upon the manners and habits of mankind, have been laudably solicitous for some additional enforcement, by legal provision of conformity and obedience. A very fair call upon legislative authority, where so much is depending, in every view to exert it's well directed and well tempered efforts, steering amidst the overflowings of ungodliness by the rudder of wisdom, of that wisdom especially, which is from above. It is a melancholy truth, when so much hath been done in this way, that more should be wanted; when not only human laws are inadequate to their purposes and ends, but when God's own command, revered by nations through many successive ages, and honoured by a pious emulation in different quarters of the world, is treated with insult, not only by contumacious indifference, but by atheistic scorn. New fangled philosophy, as it vainly and falsely pretends to call itself, emerging from the region of darkness, hath by it's deadly insinuation, poisoned and paralysed the human intellect, and boldly thrown off whatever mask of hypocrisy might once disguise it.

it. The grossest infidelity exhibits it's negative creed, and it is no wonder the worship of God at the stated time for it's most solemn display, should be neglected, when His very existence, for which we see, and hear, and feel the most positive evidence, and of which we are ourselves infallible proofs, is most daringly denied. It may reasonably be hoped, that such a denial as this is too contradictory to universal testimony to have a diffusive influence. But who can say to what extent it may go, when the accustomed rites of religion are habitually neglected, and the public worship is treated with an impious disdain, thus leaving the enemy, whose devices are so abundantly encouraged, to sow his tares without vigilance to prevent, or fortitude to resist. A time surely will come, when to such, who persist in so censurable a conduct, this sarcastical question of St. Paul will apply with peculiar fitness, and fullness, and force, "What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of those things is spiritual death." If effects follow their causes, as it will be found they do in a moral as well as a natural course of

things, what is indeed to be expected from self-gratification, originating in a violation of duties functioned no less by reason and interest than by the will and command of God? Distress very likely in this world, and unless repentance intervenes, punishment in the next. The living without God, or in other words, the neglecting, perhaps abandoning all concern about His worship and Ordinances, and rejecting an habitual attendance in His courts; upon the regular returns for it, has frequently led to consequences productive of the most dreadful temporal mischiefs, and opened too probable a passage to the tremendous infliction of divine vengeance hereafter. Be not startled at such a supposition as this; for that crime must be most hazardous which exposes men to the assaults of the worst temptations, and gives a stab to vital religion in all its parts. Such a desertion of our best friend, whose blessings are perpetual and boundless, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, must be indefensible, and without excuse; and when frantic delusion quits its hold, it is impossible to foresee, what torments may follow. A surrender

render of our best hopes, in consequence of violating our first and fundamental obligations, in the view both of nature and grace, do certainly tend to the introduction of complicated mischiefs, and frequently dreadful despair. Piety once dethroned by the usurpation of licentiousness leaves faith and virtue in a defenceless state, and so enervates the whole moral system, for want of it's invigorating power, that the several branches of duty appendant to first principles languish and fade away. For if godliness is deserted, sobriety and righteousness, and charity itself, cannot be expected to discover their influence in a consistency and regularity of practice. Religion, as hath been before observed, must have a body as well as a soul; since however the first may in this sense be dead without the last, certain it is, and observation upon the manners of mankind may soon determine it, that where no just attention is paid to the worship of God and its outward rites, neither social benevolence and it's fruits, nor personal government and it's restraints, can be depended upon for a uniformity of influence and exertion. Substantiality will be absorbed in refinement, and human nature thus theo-

retically metamorphosed, will be covered, first, with darkness, and then with disgrace. This sad consequence of magical delusion is at this very time so unhappily obvious, that we see too strikingly clear it's dreadful havock in the moral world. It tends to the CASTING DOWN, in all respects, FOUNDATIONS, and was it's spread universally permitted, for the abuse of our best blessings, an overwhelming torrent of iniquity must desolate the earth, and reduce it to a chaos of complicated misery and ruin. To live without God in the world, through carelessness, neglect, and indifference, as to his statutes, ordinances, and ceremonies, his Sabbath and sanctuary, is quite bad enough; but to profess doing so, as if it was a meritorious qualification, demonstrates a callousness of mind, and a corruption of heart, utterly repugnant to interest and obligation, and every most valuable faculty and affection. Under such circumstances, they who are alive unto righteousness, will, with an emphatic sigh, be apt to exclaim, LORD what is man thus degenerated and debased, and undone! For such replying against His Maker, such derision of His Judge, and such
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a desertion of privileges, the most sacred and most binding, must unavoidably expose him to reproach, deprive him of comfort, and utterly unfit him to meet that God in judgment, whose greatest mercies he had treated with such contempt; and the blood of whose Son, he with a scornful profaneness, to use the apostle's expressive figure, "treads under foot." Atheistical incredulity may vaunt, but it can be only for a season, and that a short one. Such contradiction, bold and persevering as it may be, must lead to confusion, and will terminate in remorse, if not in the hour of death, certainly in the day, when the prisoners of the grave shall be compelled, at the command of Omnipotence, to submit to a resurrection existence, and body and soul however separated, shall re-unite to share in the rewards or punishments of an eternal state. The consequences thus resulting from the moral or immoral conduct of man, from revering and adoring, from denying or ascribing greatness to HIS GOD, are what reason, rightly exercised always had in contemplation, and conjecture, and to which revelation hath given a clear, full, and incontrovertible sanction.

tion. Here then let us devoutly pause, and with a view to the practices of the present day, put some questions of the last importance to moral agents, to Christian professors more especially, who have a fullness of light and authority, to direct and regulate their religious deportment. Which is most suitable to this nature, and most productive of it's good and happiness, the supine neglect of God's public worship and ordinances, or a regular compliance with His command and institutions? Can our habitual absence from the habitation of His and our rest, be warranted upon any pretence of profit or amusement, when our obligation to an attendance in His courts, infinitely surpasses every inducement which can be pleaded as a bar to the payment of that most sacred debt. Charity and necessity, must indeed, always be entitled to certain exceptions, which true devotion will reconcile to, and make compatible with, it's own JUST INFLUENCE. For no necessity can take place of THAT, but what is admissible under the tuition of evangelical lenity; and mercy, upon every distinguished call, is allowed to be better THAN, or preferable

ferable to, sacrifice. Indeed, the removal of human distress, or the advancement of human joy, is in itself an act of devotion to God, and can at no season fail to ascend unto Heaven as incense. His service when sincerely performed, must be, not only the most perfect freedom ; but, when proceeding from right principle, in all it's circumstances delightful, inspiring the heart with a satisfaction which no inferior source of indulgence can produce.

Hear then this ye depraved in heart and in habit, ye sons and daughters of dissipation, who, instead of setting an example of regular obedience, turn your backs upon the instituted rites of religion, and by so doing presumptuously neglect the cultivation of your own happiness, and that of others, your families and dependants ; attend in time to these things, which belong to your eternal peace. The train of mischiefs thus brought upon society, is not easy to be described, and the end of those mischiefs not discernible by common penetration. But THIS SIN and it's progeny, are too likely to provoke divine vengeance, and to lead to consequences subversive of the best temporal blessings. There
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may be presumption in speaking too hastily or decidedly upon the judgements of God. But His providential visitations, already too lamentable in their influence, and too likely to follow, as they in a severer degree have done, when the most daring violations of His laws, have made it necessary to vindicate His government, should, unless our obstinacy is above controul, not only awaken, but convince and reclaim us. There is a connection, which can never be dissolved, between creative power and superintending rule. The rational inference from which is, that the subjects of both should do their utmost to express a becoming sense of submission to the supreme prerogative of the almighty, and a compliance with the laws of that kingdom, it's fundamental one especially, which ruleth over all. If then the Father of the universe, in whom we live and move, demands from us some portion of the time allotted for our existence, what claim can be more equitable, or what possible objection can gratitude make to it's payment? And if this claim is enforced by a reference to His own example in the view of REST, and that rest, so distinguished,

tinguished, is made more pleasant by being made appropriate to His adoration and praise; what suitability can be more striking, what duty more natural and just, what employment more delightful, what obligation so strictly binding? The decision is clear, and the application to ourselves indisputably just. The Christian Sabbath is established upon an immoveable foundation, and the motives, conspiring to recommend and give effect to its observance, are the most powerful which can be addressed to human reason, or to human gratitude, with respect to both creation, and redemption, our relation to God and his CHRIST. Our own most desirable personal comforts, the most substantial good of our dearest relatives, and most serviceable dependents, and all the great interests of society at large, are so comprehended in the issue, that resistance must be, as we too often see it is, and probably, at this moment, feel, most shockingly destructive. Beyond which, it must be remarked, that such a rebellion against the light, against the most obvious obligation of accountable creatures, casts a gloom over our best hopes and expectations,

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even so far as; in some instances, to lead to dread and despair.

It should seem then from every consideration, temporal and eternal, as if the licentious practice of the scorners, who will not have God to reign over them, nor submit to their Redeemer's easy yoke, are left without excuse, and must have before them a dismal prospect of the great day ; for the approach of which it will be our best wisdom to prepare, by assembling ourselves together, upon the stated returns of that solemn season, the Christian Sabbath ; which is made venerable and binding by it's most solemn dedication to the honour and glory, and praise of HIM, WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY.

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